

Executive mom: I was already juggling a lot, then Covid-19 hit

Big New Obstacle for Economic Recovery: Child Care Crisis

The decision to only reopen New York City's public schools part time in September illustrates the looming threat to businesses.

The Child Care Industry Is About To Collapse. There's No Bailout Coming.

It would cost \$9.6 billion a month to keep things going, and Congress is offering a fraction of that.

Here's one thing that could end poverty

A vast majority of people polled in a new survey believe that access to quality child care could help lift millions of Americans out of poverty.

Why Child Care Staff Had to Show Up While Teachers Worked Remotely

The pandemic has spotlighted disparities in working conditions between child care workers and teachers.

How parents make the workplace better for everyone

Covid has been a terrible setback for mothers who work

COVID could be the wakeup call businesses need to fix a broken child care system

Businesses have finally realized that child care damages the economy, and that it's in their best,

Why doesn't the U.S. value child care? A historic look.

Just as the Black Lives Matter movement has exposed the ubiquity of racism, the pandemic has laid bare the stunning paucity of opportunities for children and their parents.

Covid job losses hit working mothers especially hard

If the pandemic has slowed the U.S. economy, along the way, across the board, it has especially hard hit women.

Pandemic Will 'Take Our Women 10 Years Back' in the Workplace

Improvements in gender equality in the workplace may be another casualty of the coronavirus, as women find their place in the work force more at risk.

The pandemic could push an alarming number of women out of the workforce



**Child Care Council
of Westchester, Inc.**

Investing in our children's future Since 1968



Tremendous thanks to Peter Hererro of New York Hospitality Group for delivering food from Feeding Westchester to the Council so that we could get it into the hands of children and families in need.



From the Executive Director

Time plays tricks on us. More than a year into the global pandemic, you may not feel so acutely the fear and uncertainty that framed the early days, but *we remember*:

...The mother of an infant, unsure exactly how COVID-19 spreads, whether children could catch it or what the result would be. She was compelled to return to work, for financial reasons or a sense of duty to serve the public as a healthcare provider. How could she find an open child care provider who provides quality care and education? How could she make herself feel comfortable that every possible precaution was being taken? These were big questions on top of other fears – like whether she herself would get or spread this illness. But, at least she had a job...

...The parents, new to this country, who worked in hospitality and lost their full income as quickly as a light switched off. Ineligible for benefits, unaware of resources like food pantries. They kept their children home with them once they lost their jobs, but the stories of empty tummies still found their way to child care providers who made a point to check in on “their” kids...

...The home-based child care provider who cared for the children of her neighbors like they are her own. What did she do when she brought a little boy a goody bag to cheer him up, and learned his family ran out of food the day before? She went home to cook, and began delivering homemade meals, and even gave away her own groceries. That was OK for a week or two, but we quickly learned we were in this for the long haul...

...The owner of a child care center, who poured her life savings into starting a business that was already running on the tightest of margins as she sought to fairly compensate her employees and avoid turning away any family in need. Did she stay closed, to make absolutely sure she and her employees were safe, but leave essential workers without care, and potentially lose her business? Did she reopen, and try to keep staff, children and parents safe, while complying with guidance that changed almost daily? Yes, borrowing from her 401k to pay her staff, knowing there wasn't a chance of breaking even with such a tremendous drop in enrollment...


These were the stories told all day, every day in Westchester as our phones rang nonstop throughout 2020. Nationally, the same fears and challenges fed the headlines you see on the cover of this report.

And so the Child Care Council stayed open – that is, our employees put aside their own fears and child care issues – to make a herculean effort to be there for every child, parent, and provider in Westchester who needed us.

We did not do this alone. This year, perhaps more than ever before, we are thankful for our friends and donors, nonprofit partners, funders, and government officials, who were our collaborators in these efforts to keep one another afloat.

I am immensely proud of the difference Child Care Council staff made in the lives of children and parents this year, of what I consider heroic bravery from child care providers who are chronically underappreciated, and of the way our nonprofit community came together to ensure no one slipped through the cracks.

Now, let's take this lesson learned about the importance of child care and build a better and stronger system as a critical step to ending poverty, growing the economy, and creating a more equitable society.



Kathy Halas



Pandemic Parenting

Many parents outright lost their jobs, and those who were working struggled to find and afford safe child care that was open, work from home while children were with them, and/or handle remote learning. We sought to alleviate these struggles however we could.

◉ **“What’s open?”**

We called every child care provider, every week, to maintain a list of open centers and home-based providers. First responders and essential workers were offered free “concierge” referral services to help them quickly find exactly what they needed so they could return to work. To ensure essential workers were covered, we conducted special outreach to healthcare providers and nonprofit agencies, to advise them about scholarships and other ways we could help, so they could inform their employees directly.

◉ **“Is it safe?”**

Just as we provide checklists to help parents assess quality of care in typical circumstances, we developed and issued guidelines to help them find COVID-safe child care. We were constantly providing and explaining CDC and Department of Health guidance to parents (and providers).

◉ **“How can we pay for it?”**

We applaud the Westchester Community Foundation and RXR’s COVID Relief Fund for funding our CCCW First Responders and Essential Workers Child Care Scholarship Fund for families who were income-eligible and facing hardship. We also administered the NYS CARES Act scholarships for income-eligible essential workers and assisted families with the Westchester County DSS subsidy application, something few parents know about and most find difficult to complete properly. And near the end of 2020, we were so pleased to meet Richard “Rich” Duffy, who wanted to honor the legacy of his mother, Natalie Duffy, whose greatest passion in life was to nurture children and help them attain access to quality education. Thus, he established The Natalie Duffy Scholarship Fund for Education of Young Children in 2020, to help families who are just above the income limits for a subsidy but still need help to afford quality child care. In its first month, more than \$12,000 was raised.

◉ **“What can we do at home?”**

Via email and social media, we provided parents with a steady flow of ideas to keep children busy and learning with developmentally-appropriate activities. We also provided resources for parents to explore with children who might be struggling with pandemic- or isolation-related anxiety, or who were looking to talk to their children about the race and equity issues facing our nation and making headlines.



◉ CCCW Board Vice President Dr. Emily Koelsch and her daughter saying thank you to the Westchester Community Foundation and RXR.

Families participated in an art activity to celebrate the Month of the Young Child in April 2020. ◉



“Can you help us get things we need?”

We were among the first to hear, directly from parents and through child care providers, that families were in urgent need of help getting food and other essentials, like diapers and infant formula. We acted quickly to serve as an intermediary, collecting and distributing everything we could get our hands on.



United Way President and CEO Tom Gabriel to the rescue with a literal truckload of diapers.



A big thanks to HRG Managing Director Robert Sanders for his help distributing supplies.

By the Numbers

SCHOLARSHIPS for approximately **300** children, plus **FOOD, DIAPERS** and **MORE**

- Administered CARES Act child care **SCHOLARSHIPS**

CARES 1: \$404,500 to **79** child care providers for the benefit of **183** children

CARES 3: \$1,149,000 to **97** providers for the benefit of **195** children (as of May 2021)

- Gave \$184,800 in foundation-funded **SCHOLARSHIPS** to **68** providers for the benefit of **183** children

- Provided **FOOD** to **100+** families (weekly, then monthly), in partnership with *Feeding Westchester*

- Distributed more than **30,000** **DIAPERS** and **6,000** pounds of **INFANT FOOD** (to both parents and child care providers)

- Fielded more than **2,000** **REQUESTS** for **child care** and submitted **subsidy application/documentation** for nearly **200** families



Employer Partnerships to Support Parents and Promote Equity

Access to the Child Care Council's specialized referral resources is an incredible no-cost benefit employers can offer their people. This reduces stress and absenteeism, and can contribute to a more inclusive and equitable workplace by ensuring child care is not a barrier to employment or career-building. In 2020, we partnered with Eric Saidel of ENT and Allergy Associates to ensure his employees know about our free services to help them find reliable care. Not only do we serve his team members in Westchester, but facilitate connections to our colleagues at resource and referral agencies where other ENT offices are located.

“We recognize that access to safe and reliable child care is essential to the health and well-being of children, and also for our employees’ peace of mind and productivity.

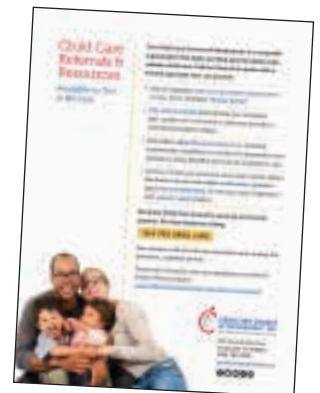


Eric Saidel (second from right) visits the Child Council and meets with staff.

Nicole Masucci at the

Child Care Council and her team developed a detailed list of resources that would benefit all of our employees - at our 46 locations throughout the New York and New Jersey metro area, thanks to the Child Care Council's relationship with its sister agencies throughout the region. As a result, everyone within ENT and Allergy Associates and its affiliates can access this incredible range of concierge services directly through the employee section of our website. While we cannot address every challenge our employees face, I am extremely proud of our partnership with the Child Care Council and our ability to provide these resources. I only wish that I had learned about the Council earlier.”

Eric Saidel, Sr. Director of Human Resources & Partner Benefits, Quality Medical Management Services USA, LLC & ENT and Allergy Associates, LLP



With a Lot of Help from Our Friends

Our thanks to Westchester County (Office for Women and the Department of Social Services), NYS Office of Children and Family Services, United Way of Westchester and Putnam, Feeding Westchester, 914Cares, the Edith Glick Shoolman Foundation, the Sexauer Foundation, Bundles of Joy, the Westchester Human Resources Management Association, Xylem, NYS Sen. Shelley Mayer, NY Hospitality Group and many generous community members who donated funds and materials for families in need. To see a full list of funders and donors, turn to pages 10 and 11.

Providers in Crisis

The people who kept the world moving during the pandemic – healthcare professionals, grocery store employees, truck drivers, cleaners – would not have been able to do so without child care. So while many schools and businesses closed their doors to stay home and stay safe, thousands of child care professionals went to work... with our support.

“How do we operate safely?”

We were in constant communication with child care providers, fielding calls all day long and hosting weekly Q&A Zoom calls to talk about health and cleaning concerns and ever-changing rules and guidance from the CDC and DOH.

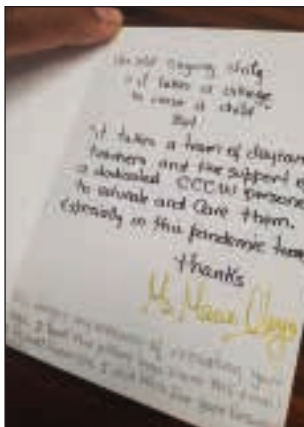
“Can we stay in business?”

When the pandemic struck, child care centers went from enrollments of 50-100 to single digits literally overnight. Many family providers had no children to care for at all. We hosted webinars about federal grants and loans and the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). Thanks to Shira Leibowitz, Ph.D., CEO and Founder of Discovery Village Childcare & Preschool, for guiding our members through the PPP loan application process.



“How do we get supplies?”

Remember when it was impossible to get enough toilet paper for your own family, or find hand sanitizer? These shortages of cleaning and hygiene supplies, and the increased costs, would have prevented child care providers from operating safely – or at all! Thankfully, we were able to purchase and distribute these much-needed items with CARES Act funds and donations from nonprofit colleagues and community members. For months, our conference rooms served as warehouses as we supported programs with bleach, hand soap, paper goods, sponges, gloves, masks, first aid kits, thermometers, garbage bags and more.



“Who speaks for us?”

While the world hailed medical workers and others as heroes during the early days of the pandemic, we felt that child care providers were largely ignored, despite taking tremendous risks and working in a financial deficit. We did everything in our power to call attention to these heroes locally, and were pleased to see statewide and national recognition finally emerge, as business owners and community leaders realized how critical quality child care is not only to children, but to the workforce and economy and a more equitable society that doesn't exclude mothers or mothers of color. Now, we are working to capitalize on this attention to secure significant public investment that will enable structural changes on the industry – including fair salaries that match the critical nature of the work child care providers do.



➤ **Bubbles!** Funded by the Sexauer Foundation, the Joy of Summer program was a three-part series for family child care providers, who we were so pleased to support with training and materials to build curriculum focused on fun outdoor learning. Over 50 providers participated in each, and hundreds of children benefited.



➤ We showed our appreciation for child care providers every way we could think of, including a parade!

Council Executive Director Kathy Halas joined Sen. Pete Harchkham, Sen. Shelley Mayer, Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul, Mount Kisco Child Care Center (MKCCC) Executive Director Dawn Meyerski, and NYS Office of Children and Family Services Commissioner Sheila Poole at MKCCC for an announcement about CARES funding, which helped parents afford child care and helped programs with expenses. ➤



By the Numbers

The CARES Act provided funding to support child care providers through the NYS Office of Children and Family Services, and the Child Care Council's staff diverted hundreds of hours to administer these funds.

▶ **CARES 1:** \$326,400 of **SUPPLIES AND PPE** distributed to **350⁺** child care programs and \$404,500 in child care **SCHOLARSHIPS** to **79** child care providers

▶ **CARES 2:** \$1,987,000 of **EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT** to **174** providers

▶ **CARES 3:** \$1,149,000 of **SCHOLARSHIPS** paid to **97** providers

The Council's daily work to support and oversee the child care provider industry continued throughout the pandemic.

Our staff:

- ▶ Inspected 138 programs for safety
- ▶ Conducted 540 food monitoring visits and reviewed nearly 2,500 menus to ensure participants in the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) were able to provide nutritious meals and snacks to children
- ▶ Successfully presented our trainings and two conferences on virtual platforms to provide high quality professional development to the field
- ▶ Provided 12 Spanish-speaking family child care providers with intensive training and technical assistance thanks to an ongoing grant from the Frog Rock Foundation
- ▶ Established book lending libraries in 7 center classrooms and 12 group family programs, to encourage parents to read to their children at home
- ▶ Supported the health and well-being of children at 35+ programs/providers via our health care consultant services



A provider learning CPR!

Advocacy Achievements

During the fall of 2020, we were able to successfully advocate for a 2% reduction of the parent share of the child care subsidy and a 2% increase in the reimbursement rate for child care providers in the 2021 Westchester County budget, which also included increases for many nonprofit contracts. Special thanks to County Executive George Latimer, Board of Legislators (BOL) Chairman Ben Boykin, and BOL Budget and Appropriations Committee Chair Catherine Borgia. We were active in the statewide Empire State Campaign for Child Care and locally, in the advocacy efforts of Nonprofit Westchester and the Westchester Women’s Agenda. We worked closely with the Business Council of Westchester, which once again included support for increased child care investment in its Legislative Advocacy Agenda.



▶ Our Voices of Child Care video series gave parents, community leaders and elected officials an inside look at Westchester’s child care system. Watch on our YouTube channel.



▶ Council staff at a February 2020 State budget forum with the Westchester State Senate Delegation.



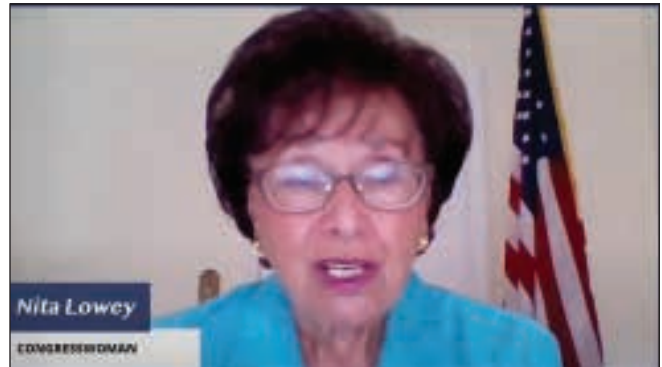
▶ We hosted a virtual town hall with newly elected Congressman Mondaire Jones.
 Rally for Child Care at the State Capitol in February 2020. ▶
 Child care advocates with Senator Shelley Mayer in Albany, February 2020. ▼



Dream Big 2020

was literally – and virtually – so much fun!

We asked the community to **Dream Big** with us, and you did! Our annual celebration went virtual with 100% Board participation and increased support from donors and sponsors!



▲ Above top: Congresswoman Nita Lowey, recipient of the Lifetime Advocacy Award.

▲ Above: Andrew and Evelyn Yang, recipients of the 2020 Child Advocacy Award

▼ Below left: John Ravitz, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the Business Council of Westchester, received the Legislative and Economic Leadership Award.

▼ Below right: ENT and Allergy Associates was our Corporate Champion. Eric Saidel, Senior Director of Human Resources and Partner Retirement Benefits, accepted the award.

▲ Above top: Child Care Council Board President Craig Ruoff of Colliers International.

▲ Above middle: Tony Justic, Partner at Maier Markey & Justic and Dr. Marsha Gordon, President and CEO of the Business Council of Westchester, welcomed our attendees.

▲ Above: Emcee Tara Rosenblum, award-winning News 12 anchor/reporter.



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July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

We are immensely grateful for your vital support!

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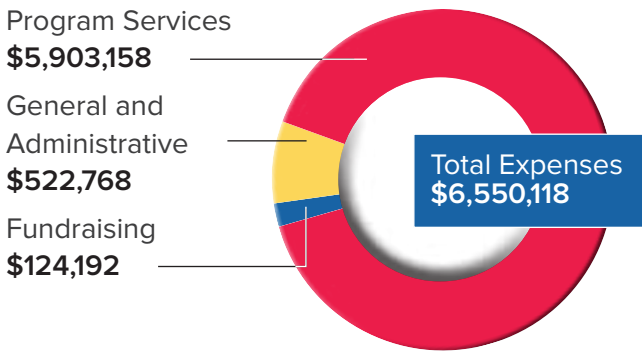
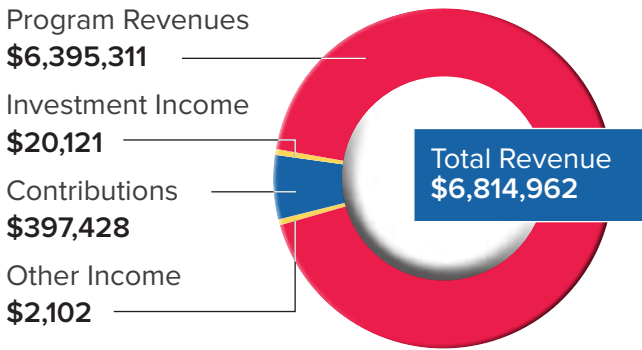
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Government Contracts

New York State Department of Health

New York State Office of Children and Family Services

Westchester County Department of Social Services

Westchester County Office for Women

Westchester County Office of Workforce Investment

U.S. Administration for Children and Families - Head Start (through grantee WestCOP)

Grants

Grants received from our generous business, individual and nonprofit partners allow us to offer important and innovative programs that improve early care and learning for children in Westchester.

GRANTOR	PURPOSE
Frog Rock Foundation	Quality Improvement for Spanish-Speaking Family Providers
The M&T Charitable Foundation	General Support
Sexauer Foundation	Early Literacy
Edith Glick Shoolman Foundation	General Support
Philip and Lynn Straus Foundation, Inc.	General Support
RXR Covid Relief Fund	Child Care Scholarships
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Juanita Pope

Office and Community Events Manager

Alexandra Santana

Assistant Director of Provider Services

FINANCE STAFF

Christine Iacovello

Bookkeeper

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Jasmine Robinson

Communications Associate

Jovanna Romero

Receptionist

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STAFF

Jami Flynn

Infant/Toddler Regional Coordinator

Carmelita Ozoa-Bota

Infant/Toddler Specialist

Sarah Merrifield

Infant/Toddler Specialist

Teresa Garcia

Bilingual Early Childhood Quality Specialist

Dana Doyle

Professional Development Coordinator

Juliana Leshi

Administrative Assistant

Cynthia Miller

Baby Steps Forward Specialist

Yvette Homar

Babies Step Forward Teacher's Assistant

Susan Panarella

Infant Toddler Mental Health Specialist

RESOURCE & REFERRAL STAFF

Cathy Fernandez

Resource and Referral Database Administrator

Debbie Gonsalves

Resource & Referral Coordinator

Andrea Rosendo

Resource & Referral Counselor

Arlene Leuzzi

Resource and Referral Assistant/Child Care Counselor

Melanie Santana

Child Care Subsidy Specialist

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Jessica Cardenas

CACFP Bilingual Case Manager

Latoya Carney-Ramsey

Provider Services Supervisor

Evelyn Henriques

Registrar

Jury Martinez

CACFP Bilingual Case Manager

Gabriella Montano

Legally Exempt Enroller

Janet Romano-Fernandez

CACFP Bilingual Case Manager

Elsa Sanchez

Bilingual Registrar

Michele Sardullo

Registrar

Monica Soto

Bilingual Registrar

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